

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Ann Cole Lowe, Fashion Designer



I feel so happy when I am making clothes that I could just jump up and down with joy.

Ann Cole Lowe was born in Clayton, Alabama in 1898. When she was a little girl, her grandmother and mother taught her to sew. The two women made their living designing and making dresses for rich women. Ann entertained herself by taking the scraps of fabric that fell on the floor and turning them into flowers. These fabric flowers would become part of her dress designs when she became a fashion designer.

Ann worked with her mother until she was sixteen. Sadly, Ann's mother passed away while they were making four ball gowns for the Alabama governor's wife. Ann was an excellent sewer and was able to finish the gowns without her mother.

In 1916, Ann left Alabama to work for a lady in Florida. She designed and sewed the lady's wedding dress and the bridesmaids' dresses. The lady saw that Ann was very talented. So she paid for Ann to go to design school at St. Taylor Design school in New York City. Being at the design school was lonely for Ann. Segregation still existed in the United States for Blacks, so the school made Ann work in a separate classroom designing and sewing her creations. Her designs were so beautiful they were often used as examples for the other students in the school.

Ann's dream of opening her own dress shop came true in 1920. She opened Annie Cohen in

Florida. She designed and made fancy dresses for rich women. Ann always created original dresses. She never made two dresses that were the same. Many of her dresses had fabric flowers on them.

In 1928 Ann returned to New York. Her dresses were sold in fancy department stores like Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus. Then in 1950, she opened Ann Lowe's Gowns.

In 1953 Ann was asked to design and make a wedding dress of Jacqueline Lee Bouvier who was marrying Senator John F. Kennedy. Ann would also make the dresses for the wedding party. Just days before the wedding, a disaster struck. A pipe in Ann's shop burst and flooded the store. Many of the dresses, including the wedding dress, were damaged. But Ann did not give up. She hired **seamstresses**, or sewers to help her remake the dresses. With their help, all the dresses were delivered. When reporters asked Jacqueline who had designed her dress, she did not give credit to Ann. Almost 70 years later, Jacqueline Lee Bouvier's dress is considered to be one of the most beautiful wedding dresses ever created.

Ann Cole Lowe died in 1981. Today, you can see some of her dress creations at the National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington, D.C.

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1. Perseverance means to continue working on a goal even when difficulties occur. Give an example of when Ann Cole Lowe showed perseverance in her life.

2. Why do you think that Jaqueline Lee Bouvier did not give credit to Ann when reporters asked her who had made her dress?

3. What does the quote in the black box tell you about Ann's career choice?

4. Give an example that supports the statement that Ann was a creative person.

